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Youth's Attitude towards elderly people in Indian Society-A Cross Sectional Comparative Study

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ABSTRACT

It has been seen that increase in life expectancy and the population of elderly has increased several health related and psychosocial problems in life of elderly people. In the development countries like our India, there are changes has been seen like decline in joint family system and other social functions. Because of these changes elderly people have face difficulty in their life. Youth should be aware about these problems and have positive attitude towards elderly people living in their society. To assess and compare the attitude of youth living with and without elderly people in their family. A community based cross sectional comparative study was carried out in Varanasi district. Total 150 respondents (75 living with elder people as group-1 and 75 living without elderly people as group-2) aged between 18-29 were interviewed using a semi structured questionnaire including socio-demographic variables and Kogan's Attitudes Toward Old People Scale (KAOP). Majority of the respondents (56%) were aged between 18-21 years, (67%) were female, (53.3%) were post graduate, (88%) were unmarried, (91.3%) were Hindu, (28%) were belonged to Other Backwards Class, (60.7%) were from urban area, nearly half of them belonged to low socio economic status and (50.7%) were living nuclear family. There was significant association found between KAOP Scale Score and socio-demographic variables; education ($p=.022$), Religion ($p=.003$) family income ($p=.022$) living with status ($p=.000$). There was significant difference were found in mean score of KAOP Scale score between graduate and postgraduate and respondents living with and without elderly people. Youth's attitude towards elderly people significantly influenced by distance from their grandparents and educational conditions.

KEYWORDS: Knowledge, Living arrangement, Aging, Older Adults, Wellbeing

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INTRODUCTION

Aging is a process that starts from birth of an organism and continued till its end of life. In very famous philosopher Seneca's words, "old age is an incurable disease".¹ And recently Sir J. S. Ross stated, "you do not heal old age, you protect it, you promote it and you extend it".² These statements have become main principles of preventive medicine nowadays.

Old age is not end of life but it is a stage of life and everyone has to pass through it like other previous stages. The United Nation defined older or elderly person, a person aged 60 or above.³ In India, 'National policy on Older Persons' (1999) defines 'elderly' as a person who is of age 60 years and above same as UN's definition. A rapid change in the population of elderly people has been seen in all over the world in recent decades due to increase in life expectancy and increase in health facilities and discovery of new treatment methods in modern medicine. India has become second most populated country in the world after China. According to census 2011, there are about 104 million elderly people (aged 60 years or above) in India. And out of this total population 53 million are female and 51 million are males.

In the last few decades a rapid and unexpected change has been seen in demographic change with Indian society and economy. The condition of a large number of elderly people has become vulnerable group due to unsurely that their children will look after them in the age when they need proper care and support of their family members. Older adults need care and support from their family as well as from their community. Positive attitude of family members and their support towards older adults increase the quality of life elderly people.

It has been observed that living arrangement of elderly people has been affected due to industrialization, modernization, urbanization, and change in life style of the people in India. A very large rate of decline in family system especially in joint family system has been observed and young adults are migrating towards other cities or states in search of better carrier and opportunity leaving their old parents in their native place.

Aim of the present study is to assess the knowledge and attitude of youth residing in Varanasi district towards elderly people and to compare between the attitude of youth who live with elderly people and youth who live without elderly people at home.

OBJECTIVES

- To assess the attitudes of graduate students and post graduate students towards elderly people.
- To assess the comparison between attitude of youth living with elderly people and youth living without elderly people at home towards elderly people.

- To assess the association between socio-demographic variables and score of Koran's attitudes toward old people scale.

HYPOTHESIS

- There will be no significance difference between attitude of graduate students and postgraduate student towards elderly people.
- There will be no significance difference between attitude of youth living with elderly people and attitude of youth living without elderly people.
- There will be no significance association between socio-demographic variables and attitude towards elderly among youth.

MATERIAL AND METHODS

Research Design: A descriptive and Cross sectional Comparative research design.

Sample: Total 150 young adult students (75 living with elderly people as group 1 and 75 living without elderly people as group 2) age between 18 to 29 years, perusing graduation and post graduation from Banaras Hindu University and Mahatma Gandhi Kasha Vidyapith in Varanasi district in Uttar Pradesh participated in this study.

Sampling Method: Data were collected through simple random sampling method.

Study Questionnaire

- **Socio-demographic Questionnaire:** Consisting socio-demographic information of the respondents like; Age, gender, education, marital status, family type, family income, religion, category, residential area, and having a older people in a family or not.
- **Kogan's Attitudes Toward Old People Scale (KAOP):** *This questionnaire was developed by Kogan (1961).¹¹ It has been used in gerontological research for more than 35 years. It was developed to assess the attitude towards older adults in society and the people who provides medical services like nurses, health workers, and doctors etc. it contains 34 statements that are 17 pairs of contrasting positive and negative statements concerning elderly people. It is a Likert type scale, the responses are ranged between strongly disagree to strongly agree. Odd numbered items contain a negative statement, while even numbered items contain a positive statement. In accordance with the structure of the scale, negative statements are marked as 6 5 4 3 2 1, from right to left, while positive statements are marked as 1 2 3 4 5 6, from left to right. The scores for every item are added together to give a total score; 34 is the lowest score, and 204 is the highest score obtained from the scale. A high score obtained from the scale indicates a positive attitude towards older people.*

PROCEDURE: Participants were selected who fulfilled the requirements of the study and given consent. They were given brief information about the study and its importance. Participants were instructed about how to fill the questionnaire and answer all the questions properly. Then questionnaire was given to the participants. The total time required for the administration of the questionnaire was approximately 25 to 30 minutes. After completion of the questionnaire by participants, researcher collected the questionnaire and assured that all the questions had been answered by participant.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS: The data entry was done using M.S. Excel and the data was analyzed using the computerized Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS), version 20, to conduct t-test and descriptive statistics. Comparison between the two groups was done by using the Independent T-test. A $P < 0.05$ was considered significant.

RESULTS

Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the respondents: The background characteristics of respondents are presented in **table-1**. Mean age of respondents is 21.59 SD 2.99, while range of age varied from 18 to 29 years. The age distribution of respondents is 56% in age group 18-21 years, 32.7% in age group 22-25 years and 11.3% in age group 26-29 years. Among all of the respondents 67.3% of them were female and 32.7% were male. 46.7% of the respondents were graduate and 53.3% were postgraduate. Most of the respondents 88% were unmarried. Majority of the respondents (91.3%) belong to Hindu religion. the category wise distribution of respondents is: 26.7% belong to general, 28% belong to other backward class (OBC), 22% belong to Scheduled caste (SC) and 23.3% belong to Scheduled tribe (ST).

Majority of the respondent 91 (60.7%) out of 150 were from urban area and 59 (39.33%) were from rural area. The distribution of the respondent as per their family income is majority (38%) of the respondent's family income lies between Rs 5001-15000, and followed by 8.7% below Rs 5000, 24% between rupees 15001-25000, 13.3% between Rs 25001-35000 and 16% above 35000 Rs. And the distribution of the respondent by family type is 50.7% belonged to nuclear family and 49.3% belonged to joint. In the present study 75 out 150 respondents are living with elderly people and other 75 respondents are living without elderly people.

Association of Socio-Demographic Variables with Kogan's attitudes towards older people scale scores is given in **table-2**. Significant association was observed between the Kogan's attitude towards older people scale score and some selected socio demographic variables such as education of

the respondents ($p=0.022$), religion ($p=0.003$), family income of respondent ($p=0.022$) and living with elderly people or not ($p=0.000$)

Compression of Kogan's attitudes towards older people scale scores of respondent as per their living arrangement is given in **table-3**. The present study found statistically significant difference ($p=0.000$) between the mean score of respondents living with elderly people mean 153.56 ± 8.41 and respondent living without elderly people.

Compression of Kogan's attitudes towards older people scale scores of respondent as per their education status is given in **table-4**. Statistically significant difference ($p=.016$) was found between the mean score of post graduate respondents mean $=142.35 \pm 11.16$ compared to graduate respondent mean $=142.13 \pm 14.90$.

DISCUSSION

Attitude of the youth and caregivers towards elderly people affects the health of the elderly people in society. Health condition of elderly people depends upon the social support and care of the caregivers and further these social support and care determined by the attitude of caregivers towards elderly people and aging. Purpose of this study was to assess and compare the attitude of youth specially college going students who live with elderly people and live without elderly people. Result of the present study revealed some socio-demographic variables plays an important role in the development of negative and positive attitude towards elderly among youth. In this study statistically significant association was found between attitude of youth towards elderly people and some selected variables like; education ($p<0.05$), religion ($p<0.05$), monthly income of family ($p<0.05$) and living condition or arrangement ($p<0.05$). Consistent with previous studies conducted in India and other countries.^{12, 18, 19}

In the present study the results also indicate that youth living with elderly people has higher positive attitude towards elderly than those who live without elderly people, similar result were found in the some previous studies conducted in different countries.^{12, 14, 15, 17}

Education plays important role in establishment of positive attitude towards aging and through this a person can improve own understanding about importance of elderly in the society. The findings of the study indicate that education was significantly associated with the score of KOAP scale, and there was also found significant difference between graduate respondents and post graduate respondents. In the study post graduate student's mean score of KOAP scale was found higher than graduate respondents, consistent with the other previous studies conducted in India and other countries.^{12, 15, 16, 17, 18}

LIMITATION

- The respondents aged between 15-17 years were not included in the study.
- The impact of youth's attitude towards older adults was not assessed.
- The result of the present study may not be generalized due to small sample size.

CONCLUSION

Findings of the study indicates that socio-demographic variables such as education, religion, family income, living condition were found significantly associated with youth's knowledge and attitude towards older adults. Youth who live with older adults in their family have more positive attitude towards elderly people compare to those live without older adults in their family. Educational qualification of youth also plays an important role in development of positive attitude towards elderly people.

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Socio-Demographic Variables		Frequency (Total n=150)	Percentage
Age (In Years)	18-21	84	56.0
	22-25	49	32.7
	26-29	17	11.3
Gender	Male	101	67.3
	Female	49	32.7
Education	Graduation	70	46.7
	Post Graduation	80	53.3
Marital Status	Married	18	12.0
	Unmarried	132	88.0
Religion	Hindu	137	91.3
	Muslim	8	5.3
	Sikh	3	2.0
	Christian	2	1.3
Category	General	40	26.7
	OBC	42	28.0
	SC	33	22.0
	ST	35	23.3
Residence	Rural	59	39.3
	Urban	91	60.7
Monthly Income (In Rs)	Below 5000	13	8.7
	5001-15000	57	38.0
	15001-25000	36	24.0
	25001-35000	20	13.3
	Above 35000	24	16.0
Family type	Joint	74	49.3
	Nuclear	76	50.7
Living with Elderly People	Yes	75	50.0
	No	75	50.0

Table 1: Socio Demographic Characteristics

Table 2: Association between attitude of youth towards elderly and selected variables

Socio-demographic Variables	Attitude		Chi-square value	df	P value	Significance
	Positive	Negative				
Age						
18-21	78	6	1.994	2	.369	No Significant
22-25	45	4				
26-29	14	3				
Gender						
Male	93	8	.217	1	.641	No Significant
Female	44	5				
Education						
Graduation	60	10	5.235	1	.022	Significant
Post Graduation	77	3				
Marital Status						
Married	15	3	1.654	1	.198	No Significant
Unmarried	122	10				
Religion						
Hindu	126	11	13.769	3	.003	Significant
Muslim	8	0				
Sikh	1	2				
Christian	2	0				
Category						
General	36	4	1.791	3	.617	No Significant
OBC	38	4				
SC	32	1				
ST	31	4				
Residence						
Rural	54	5	.005	1	.946	No Significant
Urban	83	8				
Family Income						
Below 5000	13	0	11.661	4	.022	Significant
5001-15000	52	5				
15001-25000	34	2				
25001-35000	20	0				
Above 35000	18	6				
Family type						
Joint	65	9	2.254	1	.133	No Significant
Nuclear	72	4				
Living with Elderly People						
Yes	75	0	14.234	1	.000	Significant
No	62	13				

Table 3: t-test result of the difference between Attitude and living arrangement

Variable	n	Mean	SD	P value	Significance
Living with Elderly People	75	153.56	8.41	.000	Significant
Living without Elderly People	75	136.27	11.47		

Table 4: T-test result of the difference between Attitude and Education

Variable	n	Mean	SD	P value	Significance
Graduation	70	142.13	14.90	.016	Significant
Post Graduation	80	147.35	11.16		